

Research Article

An Examination of the Trends in Retention and Performance of Students in the Traditional and Distance Learning Programme in the Last Five Years at Eastern Polytechnic, Sierra Leone

***^aNathan Mbalu Jaba, ^bTony Patrick George, ^cSia Mary Kamara and ^dSusan Yei Mani**

^{a-c}Department of Teacher Education, School of Education, Njala University, Sierra Leone

^dDepartment of Sustainable Development, University of Makeni (UNIMAK), Sierra Leone

*Corresponding Author Email: nathanm.jaba@njala.edu.sl

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Abstract

The article is set out to examine the trends in retention and performance of students in the traditional and distance learning programme in the last five years at eastern polytechnic, Sierra Leone. The objectives of the study were to: examine the demographic characteristic of respondents; to examine the enrollment of TC students at the eastern polytechnic 2012 to 2016; to assess the performance of students within their three years of graduation. A survey design with a cross sectional approach was employed and it entailed the collection of qualitative and quantitative data from various respondents. A total of 367 teachers responded to the questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion Guides (FGD). Interviews were held with Sierra Leone Teachers Union members (SLTU), Community Teachers Association (CTA) representatives, and the two Ministries of Education officials: the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE). The findings of the study indicated that in all the years under review, more students in the traditional model failed than students in the distance education model, and more teachers in the distance education models had more division two passes than teachers in the traditional model of teaching. It is recommended that the ministry of technical and higher education should provide support in the form of grant in aid to committed and dedicated students that top their class at each level.

Keywords: Trends, Education, Performance, Students in Traditional and Distance Learning, Sierra Leone.

Introduction

The distance education model has grown dramatically over the past two decades. Some studies have focused on the curriculum (Feasley, 2003) while others have focused on the instructor/learner relationship (Gokool-Ramdoo, 2008). Other researchers have focused on comparing instructional methods, for example, Maki and Maki (2002) summarize several studies that compare traditional instruction to web-based instruction. The findings in these studies have shown mixed results with some studies favoring traditional lecture courses, some favoring web-based courses, and some showing no significant difference in student performance in either type of course. Russell and Wiggins (2000) conducted a comparative review of the literature exploring 355 studies from as far back as 1928 on technology for distance education. What these studies showed, according to Russell and Wiggins (2000), was that when course materials and teaching methodology were held constant, there were no significant differences between student outcomes in distance courses as compared to traditional face-to-face courses.

Distance education is institution-based formal education, where the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources, and instructors (Schlosser and Simonson, 2009). This definition has gained wide acceptance in Encyclopedia Britannica 2009 Book of the Year. Distance education was by definition carried out through institutions; it was not self-study or a nonacademic learning environment. The institutions might or might not offer traditional classroom-based instruction as well, but they were eligible for accreditation by the same agencies as those employing traditional methods. Geographic separation was inherent in distance learning, and time might separate students and teachers. Accessibility and convenience were important advantages of this mode of education.

Well-designed programmes could also bridge intellectual, cultural, and social differences between students. Interactive telecommunications connected the learning group with each other and with the teacher. Most often, electronic communications, such as e-mail, were used, but traditional forms of communication, such as the postal system, might also play a role. Whatever the medium, interaction was essential to distance education, as it was to any education. The connections of learners, teachers, and instructional resources became less dependent on physical proximity as communications systems became more sophisticated and widely available; consequently, the internet, cell phones, and e-mail had contributed to the rapid growth in distance education. Finally, distance education, like any education, established a learning group, sometimes called a learning community, which was composed of students, a teacher, and instructional resources i.e., the books, sound, video, and graphic displays that allowed the student to access the content of instruction (Simonson, 2009).

Distance learning can help reduce the high illiteracy rate in Third World Africa particularly Sierra Leone. As the world is becoming technologically inclined, global trends in education are fast becoming more demanding. The world is going technological in its bid to enhance economic development. By most indices, Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world, and this is reflected in the current condition of the national education system. Even the higher education sector in Sierra Leone, once the leader in West Africa, its educational development is very much in decline. Traditional and distance learning co-exist in higher education in order to meet the demand for teacher training. However, as a contribution to reversing the trend of fall in standards, the government of Sierra Leone, through the ministry of education, has put a national policy on recognizing distance education in Sierra Leone and has begun to implement it. In Sierra Leone, a growth in distance education programmes can be seen because of the time and space restriction of face to-face learning system. It is also economically advantageous and preferable by working students. Student attitudes, perception, and the corresponding attitudes of the course instructor's expertise with the technology and their ability to overcome interactive problems have been found to be important factors that can influence distance education experience (Kutluk and Gulmez, 2012). In Sierra Leone, the opportunities to participate in higher education have been considerably increased beyond the traditional classroom setting to include distance learning. Advancements in computer technology and public access to the internet have provided a venue that supports distance learning. Many mainstream institutions of higher learning have adopted distance education as the next logical step in educational delivery systems. The educational pedagogy of the future has been projected to increasingly include classroom courses that are web enhanced or delivered totally online. No longer is the conventional lecture format the only accepted method of delivery instructional materials. Innovations in educational technology, coupled with the desire to serve increasing numbers of students and meet their diverse needs, have challenged many institutions to rethink and expand their delivery systems.

The roots of learning in Sierra Leone were grounded in its functionality and relevance to the needs of society both informally and formally. The ultimate goal was to produce an individual who was honest, respectful, skilled, cooperative, and who could conform to the social order of the day. Most of the learning was done informally through participation in ceremonies and rituals, initiation and demonstration. For instance, boys and girls were involved in practical agriculture, fishing, mining, cooking, caring and so on. Secret societies served as institutions for higher learning and the main societies were the Poro or Wonde for boys, and the Bondo or Sande for girls further commented that it was the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) brought formal education to Sierra Leone and as a result, this organization during colonialism founded the Sierra Leone Grammar School in 1845; the main reason was to provide a sound religious and general education for boys. In those days, provision was also made for industrial education, and in addition, a separate recessional level of primary school teachers. In that light, both the Sierra Leone Grammar School and Fourah Bay College were the first institutions of their kind in the Sub-Saharan Africa that attracted students from all over West Africa. In 1849, the female counterpart institution to the Sierra Leone Grammar School was opened and named Annie Walsh Memorial School. Later the CMS opened the Methodist Boy's High School and the Methodist Girl's High School in 1874 and 1880 respectively. From further literature research, it is evident that the education and other services provided during the colonial era were grossly inadequate and were heavily concentrated in the capital city Freetown, and in the provincial headquarters towns.

Many Pan Africanists or the nationalists commented that: colonialism left behind a large illiteracy problem and an education system that was not suited to the needs of the people. It was accused as an education system that was designed to teach the Sierra Leonean to be British instead of remaining Sierra Leonean. When one reflects on Sierra Leone after independence, it becomes clear that educational facilities were greatly expanded, as primary and secondary education became more readily available to all sections of the

country. The primary school curriculum was also reformed to make it more relevant to the needs of the Sierra Leone society. One big achievement was the setting up of the Institute of Education in 1968, to coordinate the activities of the Teacher Training Colleges and organize in-service training courses for teachers. This was Sierra Leone's first step to distance learning.

In Sierra Leone, there has been an expansive growth in distance education programmes as it covers almost all the major administrative divisions of the country. It is also economically advantageous and preferable by working students. There continues to be debates about the relevance of both teaching models. The traditional classroom environment continues to play an important role in learning (Baepler *et al.*, 2014). According to Olsen (2015) the traditional classroom is replacing direct instruction with videos and encouraging students to focus on important learning activities with their teachers inside the classroom. It is argued that there is misinformation about the traditional classroom and this misinformation can be clarified by defining the traditional classroom as personalized education where students take responsibility of their own learning. In addition, the traditional classroom allows the teacher to be a facilitator and also increase interaction and personalized contact time between teachers and students. The traditional classroom is also explained as creating problem-based learning inside the class and replacing direct instruction with videos in order to provide instructional content to be accessed whenever and wherever it is required by students (Bergmann and Sams, 2012; Hamdan *et al.*, 2013). Basal (2015) stated that instruction can be delivered by recording and narrating screencasts of work on computers, creating videos of teachers while teaching or gathering video lessons from trusted internet sites.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research design and survey design with cross-sectional approach. Cross sectional approach entailed the collection of qualitative and quantitative data from the various respondents at the same time. Descriptive research design is a plan, a roadmap and blueprint strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research objectives; it is the heart of any study (Kothari, 2004). Descriptive design was used because it looks at the phenomena, events and issues the way they are (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). We also examine the problem at hand thoroughly to define it, clarify it and obtain pertinent information that can be of use to people in the education sector. Furthermore, the design is good in generalization of the results and it is easy to administer and record answers. The population for this study consists of male and female traditional and distance education students in teachers certificate programme at the eastern polytechnic which according to the data from the eastern polytechnic institutions comprised a population of 1,428 and 2,250 distance education students. The sample size for this study was selected based on recommendation of Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), sample size for descriptive studies should be between 10 percent-20 percent of the population. Based on this recommendation therefore, 10% of the population of 3,678 was selected giving 367 students as sample for the study. This was considered sufficient for this study.

Results

The study sought out demography data of the respondents including, gender, age, household size, number of children, marital status, length of service, salary grade, job status, type of school and teaching subjects. The participants responded to most of these items appropriately. The following are demography data obtained. Figure 1 illustrated data on percentage distribution according to sex of respondent.

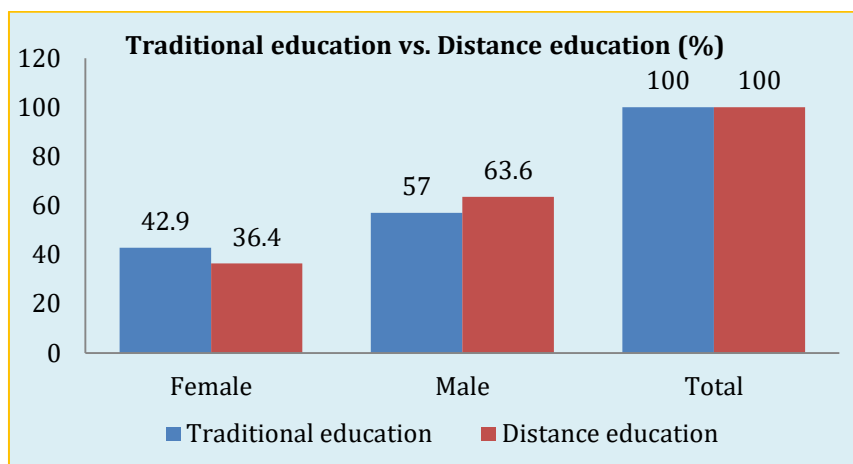


Figure 1. Percentage distribution according to sex of respondent (Source: Field data, 2020).

Figure 1 shows the sex of the respondents in the study. Out of a sample of 367 teachers 61(42.9%) are female teachers in the traditional education, 82(36.4%) are female teachers in the distance education. 81 (57%) are male teachers in the traditional education, whilst 143 (63.6%) are male in the distance education. These results show that generally, there are more male teachers than female teachers in traditional education in the district, and there are more male teachers than female teachers in the distance education.

Table 1. Rank of traditional and distance education teachers.

Variables	Traditional		Distance	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Assistant teacher	50	35.2	60	26.7
Teacher	22	15.4	90	40
Senior teacher	24	16.9	57	25.3
Deputy head teacher	19	13.3	8	3.6
Head teacher	24	16.9	10	4.4
Others	3	2.1	0	0.0
Total	142	100.0	225	100.0
(Source: Field data, 2020).				

Table 1 shows the ranks of the respondents in their various schools. The data revealed that 35.2% of the traditional education respondents were assistant teachers. About 15.4% of the respondents were teachers, and 16.9% were senior teachers respectively. Also 13.3% were deputy head teachers and 16.9% were head teachers; whilst 2.1% had other status. The table further shows that 26.7% of the distance education respondents were assistant teacher, 40% were teachers, 25.3% were senior teacher, 3.6% were deputy head teacher, 4.4% were head teacher; whilst 0.0% had other status. The information depicted here was not surprising as large numbers of respondents are of teacher rank as they were degree holders.

Table 2. Enrollment of TC students at the eastern polytechnic 2012 to 2016.

Enrollment	Traditional students				Distance education students			
	Male	Female	Total	Percentage	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
TC1-2012	229	200	429	30.0	258	234	492	19.7
TC1-2013	240	100	340	23.8	271	200	471	18.9
TC1-2014	157	100	257	18.0	379	200	579	23.2
TC1-2015	121	80	201	14.1	198	183	381	15.4
TC1-2016	120	81	201	14.1	379	190	569	22.9
Total	867	561	1,428	100.0	1,485	1,007	2,492	100.0
Source: Eastern Technical University (2020)								

Table 2 shows the enrollment of students in both models from 2012 to 2016. In 2012, the enrolment for TC 1 to TC 3 students in the traditional model were 429 of which 229 were male and 200 were female and in the distance model, the enrolment in 2012 were 492 for TC 1 to TC 3. Out of this total, 258 were male and 234 were female.

In 2013, the enrollment for TC 1 to TC 3 in the traditional model were 340 out of which, 240 were male and 100 were female where as in the distance model, for TC 1 to TC 3 there were 471 students of which 271 were male and 200 were female.

Similarly, in 2014 there were 257 TC 1 to TC 3 students in the traditional model, 157 were male and 100 were female and in the distance model, TC 1 to TC 3, the enrolment of students were 579 out of which, 379 were male and 200 were female.

In 2015, the enrollments of students for TC 1 to TC 3 in the traditional model were 201. 121 were male and 80 were female respectively. Whilst in the distance model, the enrollments for TC 1 to TC 3 were 381 students. 198 were male and 183 were female.

Furthermore, in 2016, the enrolment for TC 1 to TC 3 in the traditional model were 201 out of which 120 were male and 81 were female, where as in the distance model for TC 1 to TC 3 the enrollment were 569 out of which 379 were male and 190 were female respectively. On a whole, majority of the student enrolment from 2012 to 2016 were male.

Table 3. Performance of students within their three years of graduation.

Performance	Traditional									
	2012-2015		2013-2016		2014-2017		2015-2018		2016-2019	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Division one	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Division two	13	7.9	9	3.8	10	5.1	4	2.1	7	5.6
Division three	55	35.5	103	43.6	109	55.3	105	57.4	82	65.1
Reference	15	9.1	29	12.2	31	15.7	22	12	25	19.8
Failure	45	27.4	33	14	3	1.5	34	18.6	3	2.4
Withheld	13	7.9	45	19.1	36	18.3	18	9.8	4	3.2
Absent	23	14.3	17	7.2	8	4.1	0	0	5	4
Total	164	100.0	236	100.0	197	100.0	183	100.0	126	100.0
Performance	Distance									
	2012-2015		2013-2016		2014-2017		2015-2018		2016-2019	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Division one	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Division two	0	0	29	6.5	20	6.2	28	9	35	14.2
Division three	23	79.3	248	56.1	172	53.4	164	52.9	310	57.6
Reference	6	20.7	83	18.8	51	15.8	62	0.2	119	16
Failure	0	0	40	9.1	12	3.7	16	5.2	48	4.5
Withheld	0	0	18	4.1	2	0.6	6	1.9	18	3.2
Absent	0	0	24	5.4	65	20.2	34	11	38	4.7
Total	29	100.0	442	100.0	332	100.0	310	100.0	568	100.0
Source: Eastern Technical University (2020)										

In this part of the survey instrument, the table rates the performance of students in public examination from 2015 to 2019 in line with the NCTVA standards using grading systems from division one, division two, division three, reference, failure, withheld and absent respectively.

In 2015 in both models, there was no division one. In the traditional model there were 13 division twos with 7.9%, 55 division three's with a percentage of 35.5%, 15 references with a percentage of 9.1%, 45 failures with a percentage of 27.4%, 13 withheld 7.9% and 23 absent 14.3% respectively. In the distance model, there was no division two and there were 23 division three's with 79.3%, 6 references with 20.7%, there were no failure, withheld and absentees.

In 2016, there was no division one in both models; whereas in the traditional there were 9 division two with 3.8%, 103 division three with a percentage of 43.6%, 29 references with 12.2%, 33 failures with 14%, 45 withheld with 19.1%, 17 absentees with 7.2%. In the distance model there were 29 division two which is 6.5%, 248 division three with 56% and 83 references with a percentage of 18.8%, 40 failures with 9.1%, 18 withheld with a percentage of 4.1%, 24 absentees with a percentage of 5.4%.

In 2017, there was no division one in both models. In the traditional model there were 10 division two with a percentage of 5.1%, 109 division three with a percentage of 55.3%, 31 references with a percentage of 15.7%, 3 failures with a percentage of 1.5%, 36 withheld with 18.3%, 8 absentees with a percentage of 4.1% respectively. Similarly, in the distance model, there were 20 division two with a percentage of 6.2%, 172 division three with a percentage of 53.4%, 51 references with 15.8%, 12 failure with 3.7%, 2 withheld with a percentage of 0.6%, 65 absentees with a percentage of 20.2%.

In 2018, there was no division one in both models. However, the traditional model had the following: 4 division one's, with 2.1%, 105 division three with a percentage of 57.4%, 22 references with 12%, 34 failures with 18.6%, 18 withheld with 9.8% and there were no absentees. Similarly, in the distance model, there was 28 division two with a percentage of 9%, 164 division three with 52.9%, 62 references with 0.2%, 16 failures with 5.2%, 6 withheld with 1.9% and 34 absentees with 11%.

In 2019, both models had no division one. In the traditional model, there were 7 division two with 5.7%, 82 division three with 65.1%, 25 references with 19.8%, 3 failures with 2.4%, 4 withheld with 3.2%, and 5 absentees with 4% respectively. Similarly, in the distance model, there were 35 division two with 14.2%, 310 division three with 57.6%, 119 references with 16%, 48 failures with 4.5%, 18 withheld with 3.2%, and

38 absentees with 4.7% respectively. On the whole, there was better performance in the distance model than the traditional model which has been in existence for a very long time.

Table 4. Relationship between demographic characteristics and performance of teachers in both teaching delivery.

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients			Collinearity statistics	
Model	B	SE	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.676	.160		4.216	.000		
Sex	-.140	.085	-.133	-1.646	.101	.620	1.612
Age	.015	.003	.342	5.245	.000	.955	1.047
Marital status	-.015	.053	-.022	-.279	.780	.651	1.535
No. of children responsible for	.010	.025	.029	.409	.683	.781	1.280
Highest academic qualification	.001	.003	.018	.276	.783	.945	1.058
No. of years in teaching	-.010	.058	-.020	-.169	.866	.300	3.329
No. of years taught since qualification	.017	.059	.033	.293	.770	.317	3.157
Dependent variable: Performance of students in both traditional and distance education models at public examination.							
Source: Computed from field data 2020							

Results in Table 4 shows that amongst the demographic characteristics postulated to determine the relationship between demographic characteristics and performance of teachers in distance education and traditional education, age proved to be a major significant factor though weak relationship, but positive significant relationship. This shows that, since majority the learners were young and active, there is every tendency that they would perform better than their old counterparts in the teaching profession trained in both distance and traditional education. In considering the probability value for each variable, the coefficient table is used; in this table the results indicate that age ($P \leq 0.05$) is the only significant variable in the model. It can therefore be concluded that there is a significant relationship between demographic characteristics and performance of teachers in their teaching functions in distance education with more emphasis on age as the only variable for the significant relationship. Other variables that show positive correlation but not significant include: Number of children responsible for, highest academic qualification and number of years teaching qualification.

Discussion

The research objectives sought to find out the demographic characteristics of traditional and distance education teachers. The study take in to consideration the following variables; sex, household size, age, marital status, educational qualification, length of service, type of school, salary grade, job status, and teaching subject. School authorities interviewed reveal that teachers in traditional and distance education differ significantly in relation to sex, age, qualification, salary, type of school and subject taught.

It was also noted that there were more female teachers in the traditional education than male and there were more male teachers in distance education in the district. Hence, this can be attributed to the fact that most men are in the working class so they chose to enroll in the distance education to protect their teaching job. In addition, the research findings in the literature presented indicated that gender was significantly correlated to student academic achievement in the distance-learning environment (Cheung and Kan, 2002). These findings are consistent with the current findings. A reason for this is that male teachers in the distance education in Kenema need academic achievement. Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU) officials interviewed stated, majority of the male teachers want to be teaching and upgrading their academic qualification through the distance education.

One school authority argued, untrained and unqualified teachers' salaries are lower they therefore enrolled in distance and traditional education to realize increased in salary after their graduation. Another school authority angrily revealed, some teachers in the traditional and distance education in Sierra Leone have taught for more than two years without salary. This implied that, on the overall teachers in the traditional and distance education were not satisfied with their monthly salary and other conditions of service. The

information depicted here was not surprising as large numbers of respondents were teacher's status only even though most have taught for more three years without reassessment of salary; some have graduated but still waiting pin code from the Teaching Service Commission (TSC).

In addition, Lai, *et al.*, (2011) observed that female-teachers taught better than male-teachers and female-teachers' instructional strategies were more creative and well-designed than male student-teachers in Hong Kong. School authorities interviewed reveal that female-teachers in the distance education taught better than male-teachers in the traditional education and female-teachers' instructional strategies were more creative and well-designed than male student-teachers in Kenema district.

Moreover, focus group discussion with community teachers association revealed that there was no relationship between age and teachers performance in distance learning. In addition, the research findings in the literature presented indicated that there was no relationship between age and student performance in distance learning courses. They postulated that this could be due to the fact that most of the students in their study were working adults and more mature than the traditional college student (Cheung and Kan, 2002).

The research objective sought to examine the trends in retention and performance of students in the traditional and distance learning programmes in the last five years. The results of this study indicated that in 2015 large number of distance teachers (76%) rated their performance as fail in education. The research findings revealed that there was good performance in distance education than the traditional education. Focus group discussions with the Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU) representatives revealed the following: there were high retention and performance rate in the distance education than the traditional education; another stated that the level of commitment to course work is higher among the distance education teachers than the traditional education teachers. Another spoke about strong pupil teachers relationship among distance education teachers than traditional education teachers, others emphasized level of discipline among distance education teachers than the traditional education teachers.

School authorities interviewed reveal that there is peaceful co-existence and teamwork among distance education teachers than traditional education teachers and they suggested that this should continue. It was disturbing to note that school authorities interviewed revealed a mixed feeling on the level of discipline among traditional education teachers. They argued that high level of discipline would positively contribute to good work environment. They were of the opinion that distance education teachers are working in a team and noted that teamwork with colleagues will positively contribute to quality learning.

The results of this study support Bernard *et al.*, (2004) findings that students teachers in distance education had slightly higher overall achievement than those in the traditional education, and that the retention rate was lower among the traditional students teachers than the distance education teachers. Another meta-analysis of more than 500 manuscripts was performed by Allen *et al.*, (2004). These researchers showed similar results to that found by Bernard *et al.*, (2004), in that students in distance education courses performed slightly better than those in on-campus courses. However, in contrast to the Bernard *et al.*, (2004) findings, Allen *et al.*, (2004) concluded that there was no difference in student performance. This study indicated that there was poor interaction among distance education teachers when they are in their training as compared to the traditional education teachers.

The results are consistent with interviewed with CTA representative who stated that strategies should be put in place to improve on the quality of interaction among the distance education teachers especially in their training. Additionally, the present findings are in line with Gallagher *et al.*, (2005), they also studied retention rates. Retention was measured at six months after completion of a gerontology course and was determined by a 20 multiple-choice review test. The researchers determined that knowledge retention rates were higher for dental hygiene students in the web-based course than those in traditional course. The results are consistent with interviewed of school authorities who stated that the knowledge retention rate is high among the distance education teachers than the traditional education teachers.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that an examination of the trends in retention and performance of students in the traditional and distance learning programme in the last five years at eastern polytechnic, Sierra Leone, is a worthy initiative as it enhances quality of education despite the many challenges. This research has presented information that brings out a clear picture on performance of the two models of teaching in Kenema district, eastern region of Sierra Leone. The study relied on the traditional

and distance education teachers themselves giving their comparative assessment of the two models. Stakeholders' views on the traditional and distance models of teaching delivery have also been used to give a comprehensive picture of the two models, qualitative and quantitative analyses helped to portray the performance of teachers in the traditional and distance model of teaching delivery in schools in the eastern region. School data revealed that there has been a significant increase in the number of trained and qualified teachers in the traditional and distance education in the district, but more in the distance education than in the traditional model of teaching. However, the old problem of recruitment and reassessment continue to demotivate teachers. As a result, both sets of teachers face the same kind of challenges in the teaching profession.

Unfortunately, in a country where the majority of its citizenry are poor, traditional and distance education teachers continue to work under very difficult circumstances. There is a wide divergence between policy promulgation and its implementation. The research reveals unfulfilled promises and incomplete strategies by the government that could have better the lives of traditional and distance teachers, recruitment is a major debilitating factor that affects the performance of teachers in the traditional and distance education.

Recommendations

An examination of the trends in retention and performance of students in the traditional and distance learning programme in the last five years at eastern polytechnic, Sierra Leone appears to be complex, it is evident that the research undertaken can be of outstanding help not only to traditional and distance educational planners and policy makers but also to all stakeholders engaged in teacher's education. With the findings from the research, stakeholders can profit from the resulting better knowledge of issues entailed in the comparative assessment of the traditional and distance model of teaching delivery and steps can then be defined for the improvement of the two models.

The research inferred that there is a significant relationship between demographic characteristics and performance of distance education teachers. Result indicated the inequality in sex of teachers in distance education and traditional education teachers there are more female teachers than male teachers in traditional education in the district, and there more male teachers than female in the distance education. There were significant disparities in the teaching profession between male and female teachers in the district. The government has to be more proactive to solve this problem. Incentives should be given to female teachers to increase their enrollment in the traditional education. A conscious effort must be made to recruit more female teachers if they are to serve as role models to emulate in the traditional education. The government has to institute positive discriminatory policies to get more trained and qualified female teachers in in the traditional education.

The finding of the research revealed that majority of the distance education teachers in the district have not been re-assessed and were grossly under paid. The Sierra Leone government and the teaching service commission have to engage in fruitful discussions with the ministry of finance to make the teaching profession lucrative and enviable; this will encourage more teachers to embrace the profession and not to think of moving to greener pasture.

The result revealed that there were better performances in education among the distance education teachers than the traditional education, which is an indication that students are committed in the distance education than the traditional programmes. Furthermore, large number of distance education teachers had more division twos than teachers in the traditional education model. The ministry of technical and higher education should provide support in the form of grant in aid to committed and dedicated students that top their class at each level.

The result revealed that enrollment and retention rate in the traditional and distance education was high. However, more teachers are being enrolled through the distance education model than in the traditional model of teaching. The ministry of technical and higher education should ensure that classes are not overcrowded and that there should be a conducive friendly learning environment. More scholarships should be provided for those in the distance education model.

The ministry of basic and secondary education should make sure that programmes are instituted to monitor the performance of teachers. Special efforts have to be made to ensure that quality guidance counseling services involving vocational, academic and personal counseling are available in the schools. Also, teachers should be monitored to ensure prompt marking of test, assignment and proper classroom managements.

Declarations

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